

Used by permission of the publisher. www.uncpress.unc.edu

Reprinted with permission. No further reproduction is authorized without written permission from University of North Carolina Press. This version of the document is not the version of record. Figures and/or pictures may be missing from this format of the document.

THE ENGLISH LINEAGE OF DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER

James E. Evans

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, GREENSBORO

The narrator of Washington Irving's *A History of New York*, an odd, inquisitive gentleman named Diedrich Knickerbocker, who allegedly disappeared in 1809, leaving behind him the manuscript of this "only Authentic History of the Times that hath been, or ever will be Published,"¹ revivifies a prominent figure in English comic fiction, the self-conscious narrator. Yet no readers of *A History of New York* have commented extensively on this narrator's relationship to eighteenth-century British writers. Among early critics, Sir Walter Scott noted briefly that he had "never read anything so closely resembling the style of Dean Swift" and that he had also found "some touches which remind me much of Sterne."² Among modern commentators, Stanley T. Williams, in his biography of Irving, says about the author: "His most servile debts were to Fielding, whose conversations with the reader he reduces to tedium; to Sterne, whose Uncle Toby, now with a Dutch name, again analyzes military science; to Swift, who begot the war of the Long-pipes and Short-pipes."³ More sympathetic and more accurate about Sterne is William L. Hedges, who finds the "key to Irving's achievement" in "the ingenious device of Diedrich Knickerbocker, who manages to sound at once like Sterne's first person narrators, and Fielding's cultivated omniscience going berserk in mazes of irony."⁴ Neither Williams nor Hedges, however, chose to discuss the precise nature of Knickerbocker's heritage from Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne, or Jonathan Swift, whose persona in *A Tale of a Tub* also bears a familial resemblance to Irving's narrator. The purpose of this essay, then, is to define more accurately Irving's use of a literary tradition by identifying Knickerbocker's relationship to Swift's Tubbian hack, Mr. Fielding, Author, and Tristram Shandy, Gentleman.

The fraternity of these three eighteenth-century narrators has been well established by Wayne C. Booth. In "The Self-Conscious Narrator in Comic Fiction before *Tristram Shandy*" Professor Booth

categorizes the narrative devices shared by Fielding and Sterne into the following six groups: first, narrative intrusions "used to characterize the reader morally" and to "manipulate" him into the moral attitudes the author desires; more common and less essential, intrusions to assure "a comic response to scenes which in themselves are not necessarily comic, or which are even potentially serious"; third, intrusions describing "processes which the reader normally is left to perform for himself in private"; fourth, playful disparagement of previous writers and narrators; fifth, mock attacks on the reader, or the narrator himself as a man; finally, long introductory chapters to characterize the narrator and to create further intimacy with the reader.⁵ These six categories clearly identify the major lines of Knickerbocker's patri-mony.

Knickerbocker wastes little time bringing into his work a fairly well-defined character called "the reader" and opens the second chapter as follows: "Having thus briefly introduced my reader to the world, and given him some idea of its form and situation, he will naturally be curious to know from whence it came" (p. 23). Like Tristram Shandy, who addresses such readers as "your worships and your reverences," "my dear Anti-Shandean, and thrice able critics," or often simply "Madam,"⁶ Knickerbocker characterizes and manipulates his reader by using strongly connotative phrases, such as "judicious reader" or "unlearned reader," to place the reader in the desired relationship with the events being narrated. He warns the reader of the "labyrinth" with which he begins and applauds the courage and learning of one who progresses continually with him, much as Fielding praises the reader sensitive to "the very minute, and almost imperceptible" wheels of his plot.⁷ At times Knickerbocker implies doubt about his reader's ability. For example, he is not sure that the innocence of the early Dutch settlers would be understood by "the degenerate age" for which he is "doomed to write" (p. 141). Knickerbocker also reveals his preference for an "ideal" reader, when he divides the readers of histories into four classes. The first is a "doughty class" which is "satisfied with nothing but bloody battles, and horrible encounters"; the second is of a "less martial, but equally ardent imagination" and "a little given to the marvellous"; the third is "of a lighter turn" and reads for "relaxation and innocent amusement" (p. 131). Knickerbocker begs these kinds of readers to be patient and declares that his early books, particularly the tranquil reign of Wouter Van Twiller, are for a fourth reader "of more philosophic habits," who likes to "investigate the operations of the human mind, and watch the gradual changes in men and manners" (p. 132). His appeal to this reader to be

"grave, philosophical and investigating" is part of Knickerbocker's continuing design to convince the reader of the seriousness and truth of the work he is reading. Irving also requires a fifth kind of reader, an inquisitive one looking over the shoulder of the narrator to discern the ironies of Knickerbocker's rhetoric, to make discriminations of the kind Swift's reader must make in *A Tale of a Tub*.

On occasion, Knickerbocker does seriously (without authorial irony) maneuver his reader into a moral perspective. After he denounces the "school of persecution" found among the Yankees in Connecticut, Knickerbocker directs the reader's response to these people, who represent an immediate political evil:

Now I'll warrant, there are hosts of my readers, ready at once to lift up their hands and eyes, with that virtuous indignation with which we always contemplate the faults and errors of our neighbours, and to exclaim at . . . the preposterous idea of convincing the mind by toasting the carcass, and establishing the doctrine of charity and forbearance, by intolerant persecution.—But soft you, my very captious sirs! what are we doing at this very day, and in this very enlightened nation, but acting upon the very same principle, in our political controversies. (pp. 157-58).

In his effort to be faithful and unprejudiced, Knickerbocker points out the "merely circumstantial" differences among forms of persecution to prevent excessive indignation in his reader about the tyranny of the Yankees. His reaction to contemporary persecution is surely more exaggerated than Irving's would be, but here the difference is in intensity rather than in kind. One is reminded in this case of Fielding's manipulation of his reader's judgment about Black George's theft in *Tom Jones*.⁸

The second type of narrative intrusion, insuring a comic response, is often unnecessary in Knickerbocker's *History* because the author is, as Hedges has commented, "adept at the kind of irony that insists on the absolute righteousness of patently vicious behavior."⁹ Nevertheless, Knickerbocker does occasionally intrude to reinforce the comedy of an episode. Concluding a treaty is often a serious matter; but when Peter Stuyvesant signs a truce with the Yankees, Knickerbocker enters into a chain of "ratiocination" to convince the reader of the ludicrous error involved. He says: "I almost blush to take up the time of my readers, with treating of matters which must many a time have stared them in the face. But the proposition to which I would most earnestly call their attention is this, that though a negotiation is the most harmonizing of all national transactions, yet a treaty of peace is a great political evil and one of the most fruitful sources of war" (p. 259). The revelation of such "information" to the reader of 1809 or the present evokes laughter at the pretended seriousness of the work. Knickerbocker's intrusions raise the reader's poten-

tially serious reaction to risibility, but his exaggerations and inconsistencies continually remind us of this historian's incompetence.

Although his intrusions to achieve moral or comic responses from the reader do not explicitly describe his function as a narrator, Knickerbocker also discusses the reading process, including in his commentary activities which the reader usually performs without authorial aid. He anticipates objections which might occur to the reader: "I hear some of my captious readers questioning the correctness of my arrangement—but I have no patience with these continual interruptions" (p. 99). He leaves some speculations for the reader's "attentive consideration" and gives him "full liberty to choose" among varied cosmological schemes, just as Fielding or Tristram often invite the reader to complete a scene or a character portrait in his imagination.¹⁰ More entertaining, perhaps, is Knickerbocker's description of the response he expects to elicit with certain portions of the narrative. When he has accounted for the discovery of America, Knickerbocker says: "Having thus happily got my readers on this side of the Atlantic, I picture them to myself, all impatience to enter upon the enjoyment of the land of promise, and in full expectation that I will immediately deliver it into their possession" (p. 40). He knows what anxiety a crisis will cause the reader: "If ever I had my readers completely by the button, it is at this moment. Here is a redoubtable fortress reduced to the greatest extremity. . . . Thus every reader must press forward—he cannot refrain, if he has the least spark of curiosity in his disposition, from turning over the ensuing page" (pp. 175-76). To make certain the reader recognizes the utility of his *History*, Knickerbocker interrupts his revelations about Communipaw:

But my readers will please to recollect, that notwithstanding it is my chief desire to improve the present age, yet I write likewise for posterity, and have to consult the understanding and curiosity of some half a score of centuries yet to come; by which time perhaps, were it not for this invaluable history, the great Communipaw, like Babylon, Carthage, Nineveh and other great cities, might be perfectly extinct." (p. 83)

As Knickerbocker asks the reader to remember the importance of the work before him, we must recall the Tubbian hack's fulsome dedication of his *Tale* to "His Royal Highness Prince Posterity."¹¹ These assumptions and digressions occur because the narrator is very self-conscious about his task. The reader, of course, must test all such appeals to determine whether Knickerbocker's intrusions are to be taken directly or ironically. Not as elusive as Tristram or as consistently ironic as the Tubbian hack, Knickerbocker provides a cheerful muddle for the reader to solve.

A narrator so self-conscious about his art would naturally discuss his predecessors, particularly in a way to enhance his own prestige. Because of Irving's original plan to make his work parody a handbook entitled *A Picture of New York*, the early chapters, corresponding more closely to this plan, contain much playful disparagement of other authors, real and imagined. For example, Knickerbocker puns about the "profound gravity of deportment" of Professor Von Puddingcoft (or Puddinghead) and his theory of "gravitation" (p. 19). He exposes himself to "the cavillings of sundry dead philosophers" (p. 16), such as the Pauranicas of India or Anaxagoras of Athens, with his theory of creation. He leads the reader through a series of "ancient and outlandish" authorities (Zenophanes, Strato, Pythagoras, Moschus, Democritus, Epicurus, Hesiod, Aboul-Hassan-Aly, and others) "whose deplorable ignorance, in despite of all their erudition, compelled them to write in languages which but few of my readers can understand" (p. 28). Knickerbocker's wish to include "the evidence of our own senses" (p. 33) that the earth was created and New York discovered reflects a dogged empiricism worthy of this heir to Swift's Tubbian. When the work shifts from the original plan of parody to what Irving called the "comic history" of Manhattan, such disparaging is less prevalent. But Knickerbocker cannot pass over the opportunity to comment on the writers who tried to mythologize the death of William the Testy: "All these however are but pleasing fantasies, the cobweb visions of those dreaming varlets the poets, to which I would not have my judicious reader attach any credibility" (p. 238). And he must always exercise his knowledge of statecraft: "Whatever Plato, Aristotle, Grotius, Puffendorf, Sydney, Thomas Jefferson or Tom Paine may say to the contrary, I insist that, as to nations, the old maxim that 'honesty is the best policy,' is a sheer and ruinous mistake" (p. 153).

Like the Tubbian, Fielding, and Tristram, Knickerbocker continually alludes to other writers. Citing the historians Thucydides, Tacitus, and Livy, he designates Herodotus as "my favorite" or "my revered prototype" (pp. 8, 9). He refers to Grotius, Buffon, Helvetius, and Darwin among scientists, to Rabelais, Cervantes, and Swift among satirists, and to the King James Bible, Homer, Defoe, and Cotton Mather among many others. In his statement "To the Public" Knickerbocker hopes that his *New York* will be "equally voluminous, with Gibbon's *Rome*, or Hume and Smollett's *England*" (p. 13). Yet, finding his talents different from those of some of the authors he admires, he laments:

Oh! sweet Theocritus! had I thy oaten reed, wherewith thou erst didst charm the gay Sicilian plains; or oh gentle Bion! thy pastoral pipe, in which the happy swains of the Lesbian isle so much delighted; then would I attempt to sing, in soft Bucolic or negligent Idyllium, the rural beauties of the scene—But having nothing but this jaded goose quill, wherewith to wing my flight, I must fain content myself to lay aside these poetic disportings of the fancy and pursue my faithful narrative in humble prose—comforting myself with the reflection, that though it may not commend itself so sweetly to the imagination of my reader, yet will it insinuate itself with virgin modesty, to his better judgment, clothed as it is in the chaste and simple garb of truth. (p. 93)

Although Knickerbocker professes that he cannot emulate the styles he, as a fellow literary craftsman, admires, he undervalues the quality of his prose to convince the reader of the fidelity to truth he claims for himself. Such self-deprecation serves as another clue to Irving's irony because Knickerbocker cannot repress the desire for poetic elegance in a periodic sentence like the one above, another sure sign of Fielding's part in his lineage.¹²

Knickerbocker's mock attacks on previous narrators are not his only aggressive forays. He makes, as well, playful jabs at the reader's sensibilities, which remind one of Tristram's many challenges, such as that "upon the cleanliness of my reader's imaginations" provoked by the word "nose."¹³ When he describes the perils of writing the truth about the Yankees, for example, Knickerbocker ponders: "Thus I am sensible that in detailing the many misdeeds of the Yanokie, or Yankee tribe, it is ten chances to one but I offend the morbid sensibilities of certain of their unreasonable descendants, who will doubtless fly out and raise such a buzzing about this unlucky pate of mine, that I shall need the tough hide of an Achilles, or an Orlando Furioso, to protect me from their stings" (p. 229). While he regrets this "wrong-headed perverseness," Knickerbocker reasserts his duty to record "the sacred events of history" and his intention to conduct himself "with my accustomed calmness and impartiality" (pp. 229-30). The excessiveness of his claims to fidelity forces the reader to be continually alert for the narrator's inconsistencies. In several mock attacks on himself, Knickerbocker provides such clues for the reader's evaluation of this "feeling historian." At one point he admits a loss of composure, after he has shown the weakness ascribed to other writers, losing the historian in the man. In the chapter headed "In which the Author is very unreasonably afflicted about nothing" he confesses the "certain tenderness of heart natural to a sentimental historian" causing the "deep dejection of the spirits" and the "faltering hand" which worry him (pp. 104-05). The actual difficulty of discriminating between facts and the feelings he attaches to them repeatedly con-

fronts and confuses Knickerbocker. When he describes some lesser bureaucrats in New Amsterdam, he feels obliged to apologize for his severe treatment of these officials, remarking, "My readers will excuse this sudden warmth, which I confess is unbecoming of a grave historian—but I have a moral antipathy to catchpoles, bum bailiffs, and little great men" (p. 123). What emerges from these digressions is the subjectivity central to Knickerbocker's history, a subjectivity he shares with two of his ancestors, Swift's Tubbian and Tristram, who, of course, were writing different kinds of "histories."¹⁴

Our examination of these five narrative conventions discloses "a running account of growing intimacy between the narrator and the reader, an account with a kind of plot of its own and a separate denouement."¹⁵ The long introductory chapters perfected by Fielding in *Tom Jones* are present in *A History of New York* more as interludes than introductions, but they still function to aid the growing intimacy of narrator and reader. In Chapter V of Book III Knickerbocker pauses from his labors and invites the reader to join him in an amiable activity "in which the reader is beguiled into a delectable walk, which ends very differently from what it commenced" (p. 147). This tranquil autumnal stroll allows Knickerbocker to be more pensive and genteel than historical. Certainly, his lovely description of the "waveless bosom of the bay . . . in which nature beheld herself and smiled" (p. 150) reveals his ability to find some natural beauty to ease his anxieties about the degenerate age he constantly laments. As Knickerbocker becomes more congenial with the reader, a storm interrupts the walk and brings the historian back to his task. Yet before resuming the narrative, Knickerbocker makes this friendly overture to the reader: "But as I dislike to begin an important part of my history, towards the end of a chapter; and as my readers like myself must doubtless be exceedingly fatigued with the long walk we have taken, and the tempest we have sustained—I hold it meet we shut up the book, smoke a pipe and having thus refreshed our spirits; take a fair start in the next chapter" (p. 154). Just as he sought early in the work to move the reader into a philosophical identification with himself, Knickerbocker desires sympathy of a more social nature with those who would join him in a smoke and so recalls Fielding's considerate remark in *Joseph Andrews* that "those little Spaces between our Chapters may be looked upon as an Inn or Resting-Place."¹⁶

Again in Book VI Knickerbocker devotes a chapter to furthering his intimacy with the reader, which he labels in part "In which the Author discourses very ingenuously of himself" (p. 332). Here Knickerbocker discusses the kind of friends he hopes to have as read-

ers. Apologizing to any who might have thought him earlier a "crabbed, cynical, impertinent little son of a Dutchman," he explains that he has tested the reader's "mettle" before admitting him to a "most social, companionable kind of regard" which developed as the two "jogged along together, in the high-road of my history" (pp. 332, 333). Since he wished to avoid the "how-d'ye-do acquaintances" attracted by newness, Knickerbocker "cunningly" began his work with those "knotty" introductory chapters. Whatever the reader may sense about the historian's inconsistencies, he sees easily the good nature of Knickerbocker's tribute to the reader who stays with him. As he smiles over the departed, the little Dutchman says:

I reserved my friendship for those who deserved it; for those who undauntedly bore me company, in despite of difficulties, dangers, and fatigues. And now as to those who adhere to me at present, I take them affectionately by the hand.—Worthy and thrice-beloved readers! brave and well tried comrades! who have faithfully followed my footsteps through all my wanderings—I salute you from my heart—I pledge myself to stand by you to the last; and to conduct you, (so heaven speed this trusty weapon which I now hold between my fingers), triumphantly to the end of this our stupendous undertaking. (p. 334)

Knickerbocker presents the denouement in his relationship with the reader in the final chapter of the work, just as Fielding concludes his fictional "journey" with his "fellow-travellers" in the prefatory chapter of the last book of *Tom Jones*. In the midst of some final didactic remarks and apologies for any offenses given, Knickerbocker says: "And now worthy reader, ere I take a sad farewell—which, alas! must be forever—willingly would I part in cordial fellowship, and bespeak thy kind hearted remembrance" (p. 454).

The continual good nature of the narrator draws the reader into such familiarity and sympathy with the *History* that he must question the effects of this friendship on his judgment and recognize that, while revealing the secrets of writing, Knickerbocker also displays the enormous subjectivity involved. In one of the celebrated "historic" scenes, the chapters in Book VI describing Peter Stuyvesant's victory in New Sweden, Irving burlesques most fully the myopia of this historian. Preceding the battle, Knickerbocker prepares his reader with the confession that he does not himself know the outcome because he "generally make[s] it a rule, not to examine the annals of the times whereof I treat, further than exactly a page in advance of my own work" (p. 344). Here intimacy allows the narrator to divulge the steps taken in writing his history. Knickerbocker goes still further in his description of these processes when he tells the reader of the one great advantage of the historian: unable to save the life of his hero or to alter the outcome of a

battle, he may, if he wishes, increase the magnitude of the hero's actions. Quickly anticipating the reader's response, he justifies this process: "I am aware that many conscientious readers will be ready to cry out 'foul play!' whenever I render such assistance—but I insist it one of those little privileges, strenuously asserted and exercised by historiographers of all ages—and one which has never been disputed. An historian, in fact, is in some measure bound in honor to stand by his hero" (pp. 345-46). Now, promising his faithful reader a fierce account of "broken heads and bloody noses," Knickerbocker reveals the "best parlour of my heart" when he says, "let me never draw my pen to fight another battle, in behalf of a brave man, if I don't make these lubberly Swedes pay for it!" (p. 347).

This scene is very amusing but also serious in its evaluation of historiography. While showing the reader his feelings, Knickerbocker demonstrates the subjectivity which enables him to record a minor battle as a great historical conflict. The title of Chapter VII, "Containing the most horrible battle ever recorded in poetry or prose; with the admirable exploits of Peter the Headstrong" (p. 350), hardly suggests a small battle. The epic machinery completes his inflation; the chapter contains invocations to the muse, elaborate similes, catalogues of warriors, and heroic combat, complete with rival gods. Fielding's description of Molly Seagrim's mock-epic churchyard battle in *Tom Jones* lurks in the background of this scene.¹⁷ When the battle has ended, however, Knickerbocker, asking his reader to rest with him in a new chapter, admits several complaints about the lack of bloodshed. Seemingly embarrassed again with his fidelity to truth, he turns to his audience in this way: "The reader cannot conceive how much I suffered from thus in a manner having my hands tied, and how many tempting opportunities I had to wink at, where I might have made as fine a death blow, as any recorded in history or song" (p. 367). Again Knickerbocker tries to justify his processes with a "very grave and instructive discourse" about the responsibilities of the historian, to have "engraved" his hero's name on the "indelible tablet" of history (pp. 365, 369). Irving's skillful punning on "grave" here and elsewhere in the work undercuts with finality the historian's pretense to truth. Hedges' suggestion that the *History* aims "to emphasize the relativity of judgment to point of view and to suggest that a position can always be found from which even the greatest achievements will appear small,"¹⁸ or perhaps, in this case, from which the smallest achievements will appear great, is especially pertinent to Irving's serious intention in using the self-conscious narrator. By futilely trying to "engrave" his historical event, the battle in which no one dies, as an in-

cident of heroic proportions, Knickerbocker reinforces our comic impression of one profoundly impressed with the truth of his own history and of one profoundly lacking in "gravity."¹⁹

Although Knickerbocker's lineage includes all three of the eighteenth-century narrators discussed here, his character seems more closely related to the Tubbian hack and Tristram Shandy than to Fielding, who never intends for the reader to question his authority in the narrative. Like both of these closer relatives, Knickerbocker is in some ways the real subject of the work. Like the Tubbian, he is foolishly trying to inflate his own importance by magnifying the size and significance of his book. Like Tristram, he represents some of the real difficulties encountered in being an author. Like Tristram, too, Knickerbocker is treated more sympathetically by his creator than the Tubbian is. He may be foolish, but Knickerbocker is lovable and represents a clear manifestation of the "amiable humor" separating the laughter of Sterne from that of Swift and other earlier English satirists.²⁰ Like his indebtedness elsewhere to two other "amiable" writers, Joseph Addison and Oliver Goldsmith, Irving's affinity with Sterne in the creation of Knickerbocker marks Tristram Shandy as the dominant ancestor of this self-conscious narrator. Not a servile imitator of English literary tradition, Irving uses Knickerbocker's lineage so advantageously that he compels our agreement with this assessment of his narrative talents: "I fancy much of what I value myself upon in writing, escapes the observation of the great mass of my readers, who are intent more upon the story than the way in which it is told."²¹

NOTES

¹ *Diedrich Knickerbocker's A History of New York*, ed Stanley Williams and Tremaine McDowell (New York, 1927), p. lxxix. All subsequent quotations are taken from this, the 1809 text.

² Quoted in Pierre M. Irving, *The Life and Letters of Washington Irving* (New York, 1862-64), I, 240.

³ *The Life of Washington Irving* (New York, 1935), I, 114. Williams and McDowell, in the introduction to their edition, make a similar summary remark on Irving's "major literary influences" (see pp. xlii-xliii).

⁴ *Washington Irving: An American Study, 1802-1832* (Baltimore, 1965), p. 65.

⁵ "The Self-Conscious Narrator in Comic Fiction before *Tristram Shandy*," *PMLA*, 67 (1952), 177-79. Booth explicitly links these narrative conventions to Swift's *Tale in The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, 1961), pp. 211-40.

⁶ *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. James A. Work (New York, 1940), pp. 49, 193, 338.

⁷ *The History of Tom Jones*, ed. R. P. C. Mutter (Baltimore, 1966), p. 212.

⁸ *Tom Jones* (VII.1), pp. 299-302.

⁹ Hedges, p. 76.

¹⁰ For example, *Tristram Shandy* (II.11), pp. 108-10.

¹¹ *A Tale of a Tub to which is added The Battle of the Book and The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, ed. A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1955), pp. 30-38. Like Swift's paraphernalia opening the *Tale*, Irving's use of a mock dedication, the "Account of the Author," and the letter "To the Public" all increase our impression that the *History* is the inflated work of a self-important historian.

¹² Fielding's introduction of Sophia Western in *Tom Jones* (IV.2), pp. 153-56, is a fine "hint" of what he "can do in the Sublime."

¹³ *Tristram Shandy* (III. 31), pp. 217-18.

¹⁴ For a fuller discussion of the problem of subjectivity in this history, see Hedges' chapter "The Fiction of History" in *Washington Irving: An American Study* and David Durant's "Aeolism in Knickerbocker's *A History of New York*," *American Literature*, 41 (1970), 493-506. Despite his use of the term "aeolism," which is also a prominent feature in *A Tale of a Tub*, Durant fails to connect Irving's work with Swift's.

¹⁵ Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, p. 216.

¹⁶ *Joseph Andrews*, ed. Martin C. Battestin (Middletown, Conn., 1967), p. 89.

¹⁷ *Tom Jones* (IV. 8), pp. 172-77.

¹⁸ Hedges, p. 78.

¹⁹ Irving's punning on "grave" and "gravity" form yet another link with *Tristram Shandy*. Sigurd Burckhardt discusses Sterne's precedent in "Tristram Shandy's Law of Gravity," *ELH*, 28 (1961), 70-88.

²⁰ Irving clearly aligns himself with the English literary tradition charted by Stuart Tave in *The Amiable Humorist* (Chicago, 1960). A fuller discussion of Knickerbocker as the principal character, a subject beyond the scope of this essay, can be found in Durant, "Aeolism in Knickerbocker's *A History of New York*."

²¹ *The Life and Letters of Washington Irving*, II, 226.